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ABSTRACT

This handbook helps students with writing the college application essay, moving them through each state of planning, composing, revising, and polishing their application essays. Essays written by students are analyzed for vagueness, overwriting, and pompous vocabulary. The authors emphasize that admissions officers are looking for essays that reveal personal information about the student that is not contained in the remainder of the application. Genuineness and thoughtfulness are sought, as well as the element of the unexpected. Students are recommended to make their essays as specific as possible, using precise and economical language, as well as correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. The guide also provides strategies for avoiding procrastination and panic, including "mindmapping" or brainstorming on paper, speed-writing without interruption for 10 to 15 minutes, and "jump-starting," or filling in the blanks in introductory essay questions provided in the book. Advice is given on how to adapt a single, good essay to respond to several questions on different applications. Tips for revising the essay focus on content, interest, clarity, conciseness, usage and style, and correctness. A detailed checklist is given of the most common mistakes of punctuation, non-grammatical wording, wasted words, and stylistic lapses, along with suggested corrections. (PRW)

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